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ABSTRACT

In 1986-87, its fourth year of funding under Title VII, Project BLAST (Bilingual Language Arts Survival Training) served 185 Spanish-speaking ninth- through twelfth-grade students with limited English proficiency at Walton High School in the Bronx. The program provided supplementary services to the school's bilingual education program by developing students' skills in English as a second language (ESL), Spanish, and content areas (mathematics, science, and social studies) through computer-assisted instruction, providing career orientation/exploration training units integrated into ESL classes, providing citizenship training units integrated into social studies classes, and promoting high attendance by extensive monitoring and follow-up. Additional components included college counseling, extracurricular cultural enrichment activities, parent involvement activities, staff development, and curriculum development. Analysis of student achievement data indicates that the program met its objectives in one of two English language development areas, ESL course passing rates, or native language arts, as well as in attendance rate, and dropout rate. Mixed results were found in Spanish II through V and in content area courses, and the graduation rate objective was not achieved. Most parent involvement, staff development, and curriculum development objectives were met. Recommendations for improvement are given. (Author/MSE)

O.E.A. Evaluation Section Report

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Grant Number: G00-830-2649

WALTON HIGH SCHOOL

PROJECT BLAST

1986-1987

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A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

In 1986-87, Project BLAST was in its fourth year of funding under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The project served 185 Spanish-speaking ninth- through twelfth-grade students at Walton High School, which is located in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx.

Project BLAST provided supplementary services to strengthen the school's bilingual program, which consisted of English as a second language (E.S.L.); native language arts (N.L.A.); and bilingual math, science, and social studies. Project BLAST sought to: develop skills in English, Spanish, and the content areas via computer-assisted instruction; provide career-orientation/career-exploration training units, which were integrated into E.S.L. classes; provide citizenship training units, which were integrated into social studies classes; and promote a high level of attendance via extensive monitoring and family follow-up activities. Additional components of the project included: college counseling; extracurricular cultural enrichment activities, such as trips to museums and musical performances; parental involvement activities, including training in E.S.L.; staff development, including participation in workshops and college courses; and curriculum development.

Project BLAST's staff consisted of a project director, who also was assistant principal in charge of the department of bilingual education, foreign languages, and E.S.L.; a project coordinator; a curriculum specialist/resource teacher; a family assistant; and two paraprofessionals. Both the project coordinator and the curriculum specialist/resource teacher had time-consuming building assignments in addition to Project BLAST and classroom-teaching responsibilities.

Program objectives were assessed in English language development (Criterion Referenced English Syntax Text [CREST], New York City Language Fluency Scale, and teacher-made tests); mastery of the native language (teacher-made tests); mathematics, science, and social studies (teacher-made and Regents tests); and attendance and dropout rates (school and program records.) Quantitative analysis of student achievement data indicates that:

- Students mastered 1.6 and 1.1 CREST skills per month of instruction in the fall and spring, respectively, thereby exceeding the objective of one skill per month.

- Overall, 44 percent of the program's students tested with the New York City Language Fluency Scale made gains in the receptive and expressive modes. Thus, the objective that 75 percent of the students would make gains was not met.

- Overall, 75 percent of program students achieved a passing grade of 65 or higher in E.S.L. courses, thereby exceeding the objective by five percentage points.

- Eighty-five percent of the students in N.L.A. classes passed with a grade of 65 percent or higher, thereby exceeding the program's objective (that 75 percent of the students would pass) by 10 percentage points.

- Program students did not meet the objective that 80 percent would pass Level II Spanish. In the fall, 89 percent, and in the spring, 96 percent of the students enrolled in Level III Spanish passed the Regents exam. Thus, the objective that 90 percent of the students in the project would pass the Regents was met in the spring but not in the fall. Ninety-one percent of the students enrolled in Level IV Spanish in the fall and 90 percent of the students enrolled in Level IV Spanish in the spring passed, thereby achieving the objective of a 90 percent passing rate. Finally, 100 percent of the students enrolled in Level V Spanish passed both semesters, thereby exceeding the project objective of a 90 percent passing rate.

- The content-area objective was not assessable as proposed, but program students' passing rates in mathematics, science, and social studies were equal to or significantly higher than those of mainstream students.

- The percentage of program students who graduated was less than the percentage of mainstream students who graduated. Thus the objective that program students would have the same or a higher graduation rate than mainstream students was not achieved.

- The attendance rate of program students -- 87 percent -- was 11 percentage points higher than the school-wide rate. This exceeded the objective that program students' attendance rate would exceed that of mainstream students by five percentage points.

- Program students' dropout rate -- five percent -- was six percentage points lower than the school-wide rate. Thus the objective that program students' dropout rate would not exceed that of mainstream students was met.

- Students exiting the program did not achieve the program objective of a 90 percent passing rate in the math Regents; but they did achieve the objective of a 70 percent passing rate in mainstream content-area courses.

In addition, the project met most of its objectives in the areas of parental involvement, staff development, and curriculum development.

Based on classroom observations, interviews with members of the BLAST staff and classroom teachers and analysis of program records, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations for improving the program:

- If at all possible, the school administration should avoid giving project staff members time-consuming building assignments in addition to their teaching and Title VII responsibilities.

- If Title VII funding is reduced in the coming academic year, the project might request ASPIRA, a community-based Hispanic social-service organization, to provide a part-time counselor to give college counseling.

- With input from appropriate assistant principals, program staff and the bilingual guidance counselor might meet to develop commonly-shared principles to guide the decisions concerning student programming. This should be based on local legal mandates and an awareness of individual student needs. Hopefully, educators serving bilingual students can seek ways to keep older LEPs in school, including making up credits in summer or evening classes, rather than discharging them routinely.

- Because the technical qualities of the New York City Language Fluency Scale are unknown and its scoring is subjective, the evaluation team recommends that it be replaced with a standardized instrument, such as the speaking and listening subtests of the Language Assessment Battery.

- Project staff should reformulate those instructional objectives which are stated in non-measurable terms, or for which valid measures are unavailable.

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WALTON HIGH SCHOOL

PROJECT BLAST

Location:	West 196th Street and Reservoir Avenue Bronx, NY 10468
Year of Operation:	1986-87, fourth year of funding
Target Language:	Spanish
Number of Students:	185
Assistant Principal/ Project Director:	Ms. Norma Cruz-Dunn (fall) Ms. Paula McCalla (spring)
Project Coordinator:	Ms. Elizabeth Yarbrough

I. INTRODUCTION

Project BLAST (Bilingual Language Arts Survival Training), was in its fourth year of funding under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The project was located at Walton High School next to Lehman College, in the northwest Bronx. The immediate environs consist of low- and middle-income two- and three-family houses, as well as several large apartment buildings, some of which are cooperatives. Kingsbridge Avenue, three blocks from the school, is a bustling commercial street containing family-owned stores, chain stores, banks, and offices.

The school is a well maintained, H-shaped structure built over 50 years ago. Since it is a non-zoned school, its students come from all over the borough, but the majority are from south of Fordham Road, a low-income black and Hispanic area. Forty-eight percent of Walton's 3,484 students were native speakers of Spanish; seven percent were native speakers of Asian languages;

and the remainder were English speakers, of whom the overwhelming majority were black.

WALTON HIGH SCHOOL

PROJECT BLAST

1986-1987

OEA Evaluation Report

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II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

STRUCTURE

Project BLAST was funded in 1983 to provide support services to a preexisting bilingual program for Spanish-speaking students, who were enrolling in the school in increasing numbers. BLAST sought to improve students' English language skills and to provide them with career orientation, survival or coping skills, and citizenship training.

The project was restructured in September 1984 by placing all native language arts (N.L.A.) and English as a second language (E.S.L.) teachers in a newly created department of bilingual education, E.S.L., and foreign languages, which was supervised by an assistant principal (A.P.) who also was director of Project BLAST. Because of the A.P.'s heavy workload, a project coordinator supervised BLAST on a day-to-day basis.

Last year's evaluation report stated that this restructuring improved the supervision and coordination of staff and students and enhanced communication among teachers. The A.P./project director coordinated with the content-area A.P.s; observed classes; evaluated courses of study, texts, and curricular materials; and regularly met with bilingual content-area, E.S.L., and native language arts teachers.

The bilingual program provided E.S.L., native language arts, and bilingual content-area instruction; participating students took physical education and other elective courses with mainstream students. Tutoring by peers and paraprofessionals was

provided on a daily basis. BLAST sponsored non-instructional activities, including career and college counseling and field trips.

STAFFING

The Title VII-funded staff, which provided support services for Walton's bilingual instructional program, consisted of a project coordinator, a curriculum specialist/resource teacher, a family assistant, and two paraprofessionals. The bilingual program's instructional staff, which was supported by a variety of funding sources, consisted of eight E.S.L. teachers, two bilingual social studies teachers, one bilingual science teacher, and one bilingual math teacher. Two Chapter I and two P.S.E.N.-funded paraprofessionals assisted in E.S.L. classes; and two Title VII-funded paraprofessionals assisted in bilingual content-area classes.

All members of the teaching staff were highly qualified: 13 had master's degrees; five had accumulated credits equivalent to a master's degree; and five had bachelor's degrees. They had an average of 12 years of teaching experience. One paraprofessional had a bachelor's degree, two had associate's degrees, and three others were enrolled in B.A. programs. Five paraprofessionals had 15 or more years of experience. The family assistant had a bachelor's degree in psychology and 9 years of experience.

In February 1987, a new person was appointed A.P. of the bilingual, E.S.L., and foreign languages department and BLAST project director. According to her and to project staff members,

the transition process had gone smoothly. Project BLAST staff members were enthusiastic about the new A.P., who they said cared about the students and had been able to improve both Project BLAST and Project CLIMB, another Title VII project which offered services to Vietnamese and Cambodian students at Walton. The new A.P./project director had obtained the principal's approval to institute, beginning in the fall of 1987, separate Spanish classes for native and non-native Spanish speakers. The new project director said that her previous experience as Language Assessment Battery (LAB) coordinator at a school hosting another Title VII program had been good preparation for her present role.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Since the Spring of 1986, Project BLAST has had to share its office with that of Project CLIMB. Although the two programs had a good relationship, the lack of privacy resulting from this arrangement was said to have created problems. For example, the family assistant said that students who came to her for counseling were discomfited by the presence of other people, and could not talk freely.

Walton's bilingual guidance counselor was responsible for programming all the school's LEP students. There was a fundamental difference of approach between the guidance counselor and the BLAST staff with regard to mainstreaming and discharging LEP students. The guidance counselor believed that students should not receive bilingual education for more than three years. The BLAST staff believed that this philosophy led

the guidance counselor to mainstream some students before they were ready -- sometimes without their consent. The BLAST staff also reported that the bilingual guidance counselor advised students who reached graduation age without accumulating the credits necessary for graduation to leave Walton and enroll in a G.E.D. program. They felt other alternatives to discharge were preferable.

Although 80 percent of the salaries of the project coordinator and the resource teacher was paid by Title VII and both had classroom teaching assignments, the two had been given building assignments as well. One such assignment was to supervise 11 students and more than 30 nursery school children participating in Walton's pre-teaching program. The project coordinator reported that her building assignment was so time consuming that she was forced to counsel parents in front of the students' bathroom, which she had been assigned to patrol. After Easter vacation, Title VII staff also were assigned to patrol the hall during the homeroom period. These tasks in addition to their classroom teaching responsibilities, weighed heavily on the Title VII staff and affected their ability to administer the program and provide support services as proposed. Staff were fearful that, as Title VII funding might be further reduced or cut altogether, they would be unable to provide the supplementary services LEP students badly need.

Problems like this suggest that the school administration does not fully support the project. Despite this, the project

staff appears to have worked hard to provide students with a meaningful educational experience.

III. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Students were placed in the program as a result of individual interviews, evaluation of transcripts, and a score below the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the LAB. BLAST served 185 students during the year under review, 167 of whom were enrolled in the fall and 164 in the spring. (In other words, 146 students were enrolled both semesters; 21 were enrolled in the fall only; and 18 were enrolled in the spring only.) Data also were received for 61 students who had been enrolled in the program during the previous year but left prior to September 1986. Of these, 22 were mainstreamed; 13 graduated; 10 transferred; and the rest left for unknown reasons. Fifty students who were served during the academic year left the program for reasons such as graduation, family problems, and mainstreaming. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

Number of Students Leaving the Program

Reason For Leaving	Left By January 1987	Left By June 1987	Percent of Total
Mainstreamed	3	19	42
Transferred	5	5	20
Graduated	3	3	12
Family Problem	2	1	6
Other Reasons	8	1	18
TOTAL	21	29	98

- A total of 50 students (27 percent) left the program during the academic year.

Of the 163 students present in the program in the spring, 61 (37 percent) had participated for one year or less; 36 (22 percent) had participated for about two years; 65 (40 percent) had participated for about three years; and one student had been enrolled for four. (Data on years of participation in the program were missing for one student.)

According to project staff members, the students had come to the United States with their families in search of better financial and educational futures. Either they had very recently arrived from the Caribbean, Central America, or South America, or they had entered Walton from junior high schools that were not served by Title VII projects. The majority had been in the United States for under two years. (Table 2 presents the program students by country of birth.)

Data on sex by grade were available for 163 students. Female students outnumbered male students, 59 percent to 41 percent. The highest percentage of female students was in grade twelve (73 percent of 11 twelfth graders); the lowest was in grade ten (57 percent of 37 tenth graders).

Table 3 presents the distribution of program students by age and grade. Of the 164 students for whom complete data were provided, 46 percent were in grade nine, 23 percent were in grade ten, 25 percent were in grade eleven, and 6 percent were in grade twelve. Fifty-nine percent of the students were overage for their grade placement. The highest percentage of overage students was in grade nine (71 percent); the lowest was in grade

TABLE 2

Number and Percent of Program Students by Country of Birth

Region	Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Caribbean	Dominican Republic	74	42.3
	Puerto Rico	62	35.4
	Cuba	3	1.7
	Haiti	1	*
South America	Ecuador	12	6.9
	Colombia	1	*
Central America	Honduras	5	2.9
	El Salvador	3	1.7
	Nicaragua	2	1.1
	Guatemala	2	1.1
	Costa Rica	1	*
	Mexico	1	*
	Panama	1	*
Other Middle East	--	1	*
Asia	Korea	1	*
North America	U.S.A.	5	2.9
		175**	100.0

*Less than one percent.
**Data were missing for 10 students.

•The majority of program students were born in the Dominican Republic (42 percent) and Puerto Rico (35 percent).

ten (46 percent).

Although the majority of students came from single- or two-parent households, the parents of some did not live in the United States; these students lived with relatives. According to project staff, some students shuttled back and forth between the United States and Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic; as a consequence, their education was interrupted.

Table 4 presents project students' educational background. Overall, the mean number of years of schooling in the native country was 7.8 (s.d. ± 1.6), and ranged from 7 years (s.d. ± 1.5) for ninth graders to 9.6 years (s.d. ± 1.7) for twelfth graders. The overall mean number of years of education in the United States was 2.9 (s.d. ± 1.8); there was little variation between grades. The mean for the ninth and tenth grades was 3.0, suggesting that they included students who had attended junior high school in the United States. However, the means for the eleventh and twelfth grades were 2.8 and 2.7, respectively, which indicates that these grades were more likely to contain students whose first educational experience in the United States was at the high school level.

In general, program students were described as intelligent, highly motivated, and eager to go to college. They had good educational backgrounds, which gave them the potential to excel academically.

TABLE 3

Number of Program Students by Age* and Grade

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
13	2	0	0	0	2
14	8	0	0	0	8
15	12	7	1	0	20
16	35	13	14	0	63
17	14	8	6	3	31
18	3	6	12	2	23
19	1	3	6	1	11
20	0	0	2	3	5
21	0	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	75	37	41	11	164**
Overage Students					
Number	53	17	20	6	96
Percent	70.7	45.9	48.8	54.5	58.5

Note. Numbers in bold area reflect expected age range for grade.

*Age on June 30, 1987.
**Data were missing for 21 students.

- Fifty-nine percent of program students were overage for their grade placement.
- Grade nine had the highest percent (71 percent) of overage students, whereas grade ten had the lowest (46 percent).

TABLE 4

Students' Years of Education by Grade

	Total Years of Education						Years Education Native Country		Years Education United States	
Grade	9	10	11	12	>12	Total	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
9	24	39	4	0	0	67	7.0	1.5	3.0	2.3
10	2	14	15	1	3	35	7.7	1.3	3.0	1.2
11	0	0	28	8	4	40	8.6	1.2	2.8	1.3
12	0	0	2	4	5	11	9.6	1.7	2.7	1.9
TOTAL	26	53	49	13	12	153*	7.8	1.6	2.9	1.8

* Data for 32 program students were incorrect or missing.

• Overall the mean number of years of education in the native country was 7.8(s.d.±1.6); the overall mean in the United States was 2.9(s.d.±1.8).

IV. FINDINGS

The evaluation findings include results of standardized tests and other quantitative measures; of observation and examinations of classes, program materials, departmental minutes, and similar records; and of interviews with project staff members and other relevant personnel.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

- -- The project students will master an average of one objective per 20 days of instruction on the Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST).
- -- At least 75 percent of students will achieve a gain in level on the New York City Language Fluency Scale.
- -- At least 70 percent of program students will score at or above the 65 percent passing criterion in English as a second language.

E.S.L. was offered to program students in a four-year sequence. Students in elementary and intermediate E.S.L. also received career-orientation and career-exploration instruction. During their first two years in the program, students took 15 periods of E.S.L. per week; during their third year, they took 10 periods per week. E.S.L. 6 through 8 were designed to prepare students to enter the mainstream curriculum. Students also attended a weekly E.S.L. computer lab, where they had access to such software programs as English Basics, Verbs, Synonyms and Antonyms, and Bank Street Writer. Program staff and teachers had trained themselves to use the computer for E.S.L. instruction, with one teacher who had more experience than the rest serving as a resource teacher.

The department carefully reviewed textbooks for each E.S.L. level before making a selection. In 1986-87, it adopted a new text for classroom use, English for A Changing World; this text came with audiocassettes and other learning aids.

A member of the evaluation team was able to observe an intermediate E.S.L. class and a beginning E.S.L. computer lab. Intermediate E.S.L. emphasized reading and writing. Sixteen students out of the 19 in the class were BLAST students; the rest were Asians. Students first were asked to write three sentences with the words "to appear," "to pack," and to honor," which they had learned the previous day. Three students wrote their sentences on the blackboard. The rest of the class then corrected them with the teacher's help.

The aim of the lesson was to read a story, "The Date," from the text Modern Short Biographies. The teacher reviewed the vocabulary contained in the story by asking students to explain the meaning of each new word. The teacher wrote each definition on the blackboard and asked the students to repeat each word aloud. Students then took turns reading paragraphs from the story, with the teacher asking questions at the end of each paragraph to assess their comprehension. The students appeared attentive; they took notes and answered throughout the lesson.

In the beginning E.S.L. computer lab, 15 students, 11 of them BLAST members, were using Apple computers to practice the transformation of affirmative sentences into the negative. The teacher, who had experience using computers to teach E.S.L., gave

students a list of sentences in the negative form. To check whether their transformations were correct, the students keyed the original sentences into the computer; a software program then showed the correct transformation for each sentence. After the students finished this exercise, they used another software program, the Story Board, designed to develop comprehension skills. The teachers selected a short story from among those available on the disk. After the students read the story, it reappeared on the screen with words missing and students were asked to supply them. If an answer was correct, the word appeared in all its correct locations in the story: if an answer was not correct, the screen flashed "bad luck."

Some students worked in pairs, especially for the final exercise, in which the teacher asked all of them to work with a companion. According to the teacher, since the class rule was that students could speak only English, working in pairs helped them develop their English verbal skills. The teacher and the paraprofessional walked from desk to desk to make sure that the students were observing the English-only rule and to check their work. The instructor reported that students loved to work at the computers and gladly would have used them more. According to the teacher, similar enthusiasm was not expressed for the regular E.S.L. classes.

Student Achievement in E.S.L.

The assessment instrument used to evaluate the first objective in this area was the Criterion Referenced English Syntax

Test* (CREST). The CREST was administered at the beginning and the end of each semester. A mastery score to indicate gains was computed for each student by calculating the difference between pretest and posttest. The number of months of instruction between testings was computed for each student by multiplying the number of months between testings by the student's attendance rate. The number of skills mastered per month was calculated by dividing the mean mastery by the mean number of months of instruction between testings.

Table 5 presents the test results for students who were pretested and posttested with the same level. Of the students who were reported to be taking E.S.L. classes (levels 1, 2, and 3), complete data (levels, pretest score, and posttest score) were available for 89 percent in the fall and 64 percent in the spring.

Examination of Table 5 reveals that overall, students mastered 1.6 CREST skills per month in the fall, and 1.1 CREST skills per month in the spring. Therefore, the first E.S.L. objective was achieved.

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*The Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure mastery of instructional objectives of the E.S.L. curricula, and thus was constructed to maximize content validity. The test contains four items per curricular objective, and mastery of an objective is achieved when three of these items are answered correctly. The test measures mastery of 25 objectives at Levels 1 and 2, and 15 objectives at Level 3. The Kuder-Richardson Reliability Estimates for pretest and posttest administrations of the three levels of the CREST are:

Level 1 -- pretest (.91)/posttest (.96)
Level 2 -- pretest (.94)/posttest (.95)
Level 3 -- pretest (.91)/posttest (.91).

TABLE 5

Results of the Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test

Test Level	Number of Students	PRETEST Mean	PRETEST S.D.	POSTTEST Mean	POSTTEST S.D.	MASTERY Mean	MASTERY S.D.	Mean MASTERY Per Month
				FALL				
1	26	11.0	6.6	17.0	7.3	6.0	5.2	2.0
2	66	11.5	6.0	16.4	6.0	5.0	4.0	1.7
3	31	7.3	2.6	11.7	4.3	4.4	3.5	1.4
TOTAL	123	10.4	6.0	15.4	6.3	5.0	4.1	1.6
				SPRING				
1	9	12.6	4.0	19.0	4.7	6.3	3.2	2.1
2	40	13.0	5.4	17.0	5.1	4.0	2.6	1.4
3	36	10.0	3.5	11.4	3.0	1.4	1.3	0.5
TOTAL	85	11.6	4.7	14.8	5.2	3.2	2.7	1.1

- Overall, the program met its objective both semesters: on the average, students mastered more than one CREST skill per month of instruction.

The instrument used to measure the second objective in this area was the New York City Language Fluency Scale, Expressive and Receptive Modes.* Data were available for 147 students, or 79 percent of the total. These data are presented in Table 6.

Examination of the table reveals that 45 percent of the students who were tested made gains of at least one level in the receptive mode, and 44 percent made gains in the expressive mode. Thus, the second E.S.L. objective was not met.

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*This scale was developed in New York for use as a screening device prior to the development of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB). Instructions for its administration are no longer available, nor are norms. Its technical qualities are not known, and its scaling is subjective.

TABLE 6

Students' Gains on the New York City Language Fluency Scale

Pretest Level	Number of Students	Percent Advicing At Least One Level
	RECEPTIVE MODE	
2	4	.0
3	22	18.0
4	45	28.9
5	54	53.7
6	17	88.2
7	5	100.0
TOTAL	147	44.9
	EXPRESSIVE MODE	
B	4	.0
C	22	18.0
D	46	28.3
E	55	52.7
F	15	86.7
G	5	100.0
TOTAL	147	43.5

- Forty-five percent of the students made gains in the receptive mode, and 44 percent made gains in the expressive mode. Thus, the program objective was not met.

Table 7 presents the passing rates of program students in E.S.L. It indicates that 77 percent of the students achieved a passing grade of 65 percent or higher in the fall and 73 percent achieved a passing grade in the spring. Therefore, the objective that 70 percent of the students would achieve a passing grade was met both semesters. Data were reported for 140 students (84 percent) in the fall and 130 (79 percent) in the spring.

TABLE 7

Passing Rates in E.S.L. Courses

	FALL		SPRING		TOTAL
COURSE	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Overall Passing Rate
E.S.L.	140	77.1	130	73.1	75.2

- Program students surpassed the objective of a 70 percent passing rate both semesters.

NATIVE LANGUAGE OBJECTIVE

-- At least 75 percent of the students will score at or above the 65 percent passing criterion in native language arts or Spanish language courses each semester/year.

-- Eighty percent of the students in Level II Spanish will pass a teacher-made final examination; 90 percent of the students in Level III Spanish will pass a New York State Regents Examination; 90 percent of the students in Level IV Spanish will pass a teacher-made final examination; 90 percent of the students in Level V will pass a teacher-made final examination.

According to staff members, project students were quite literate in Spanish, and the majority were enrolled in third-year Regents' classes, or in fourth- and fifth-year classes. Forty-nine program students in the fall and 32 in the spring also attended an advanced N.L.A. class. This class focused on literature and literary analysis and was designed for advanced N.L.A. students who had been mainstreamed. In addition, seven program students in the fall and ten in the spring were preparing for advanced placement exams in Spanish language and literature. If they passed, they would receive three to six college credits. Departmental funds were provided to pay the fees for this test.

N.L.A. students used the computer on a weekly basis to type and edit their essays. The best of their work was printed in the program newsletter. A new software package, El Mundo Hispanico, which combined cultural information and language, was added to the computer library this year.

In addition to classroom work, BLAST tried to increase students' awareness of and pride in their native culture. As

part of this effort, students were taken to a production of the Spanish Repertory Theatre and to an Afro-Caribbean dance performance.

However, according to the new project director, the N.L.A. component was weakened by the lack of separate classes for native Spanish speakers. She felt that mixing mainstream with bilingual students had resulted in a unsatisfactory curriculum for both groups. This situation was due to change in the coming academic year because approval had been received to program separate classes for native and non-native speakers.

A member of the evaluation team observed an advanced Spanish class where students were preparing for the Regents' examination. According to the teacher, only seven of the 24 students in the class were BLAST members; the others were honor students or college-bound students. The teacher used Spanish throughout the lesson; however, she occasionally used English to make sure that students understood the assignment.

The first part of the class was devoted to oral comprehension exercises. The teacher read a brief paragraph. Students did not have a text; instead they had a sheet containing multiple-choice questions about the passage, from which they had to choose the correct answer. After each question, the teacher translated or asked students to translate sentences from the paragraph that contained the answer to that question.

The teacher then moved on to a reading about the infatuation of a young boy for a girl, "Estoy loco por ti, Lupida." Students

took turns reading the short story from their textbook. The teacher translated and explained in English new vocabulary and important points of grammar. The students were very disciplined and participated actively in the class. The teacher also reported that students enjoyed going to the computer lab, where they wrote poems and essays.

Student Achievement in Native Language Arts

The passing rate for students enrolled in N.L.A. classes was 85 percent in both the fall (118 students of the 139 enrolled) and the spring (111 students of the 131 enrolled). BLAST students thus surpassed the 75 percent objective both semesters.

Of the program students enrolled in Level II Spanish (third semester) courses, 78 percent passed in the fall and 59 percent passed in the spring. Of those enrolled in Level II Spanish (fourth semester), 58 percent passed in the fall and 63 percent passed in the spring. Thus, the objective that 80 percent of the students enrolled in Level II Spanish would pass a teacher-made final exam was not met.

Students in Level III Spanish classes achieved passing rates on the New York State Regents Exam of 89 percent in the fall and 96 percent in the spring. Thus, the objective of a 90 percent passing rate was met in the spring but not in the fall.

Students enrolled in Level IV Spanish classes passed a teacher-made final examination at the rate of 91 percent in the

fall and 90 percent in the spring, thus achieving the objective of a 90 percent passing rate.

Of the program students enrolled in Level V Spanish courses, 100 percent passed teacher-made final exams in both the fall and the spring, thereby surpassing the objective of a 90 percent passing rate.

CONTENT-AREA OBJECTIVE

-- The percent of LEP students enrolled in bilingual mathematics, science, and social studies will be on a par statistically with the percentage passing school-wide uniform examinations in mainstream classes on a comparable level.

Bilingual fundamental mathematics for ninth and tenth graders, computer math, general science, biology, and global history were offered both semesters. In addition, a social studies course on China, Japan, and the Soviet Union, and another course on American history were offered in the fall; in the spring, a social studies course that focused on Africa and another one on economics were offered.

To ensure that bilingual classes were on a par with mainstream ones, the project coordinator and resource teacher observed mainstream classes to make sure that the curricula, texts, and materials used in bilingual courses were commensurate with those used in the mainstream; in addition, all examinations used in bilingual content-area classes were translations of those used in the mainstream.

Content-area courses were taught largely, if not entirely, in Spanish, with teachers providing English vocabulary lists, and in some cases summarizing lessons in English. Although a policy of gradually increasing the use of English in content-area courses had been discussed at departmental meetings and was widely acknowledged to be desirable, it had proven difficult to implement because of varying student abilities in classes.

Science, history, and math classes made use of the computer

lab. Since the software was in English, these labs enabled students to develop their English while at the same time learning content-area materials and developing computer skills.

Bilingual computer math was offered to ninth- and tenth-grade students who had not passed the Regents Competency Test. One class was offered each semester. According to the math teacher, the course was designed to teach students mathematics and to help them improve their English. The computer was used to facilitate the learning process. The teacher was very pleased with the students' progress and said that using the computer had helped many students to move on to more advanced mainstream classes. He was especially proud of two former students who currently were enrolled in honors math.

A member of the evaluation team observed the computer math class and a social studies class. The computer math class was taught in Spanish. The lesson that was observed took place in a regular classroom. The teacher handed out two computer programs written in BASIC and several algebra problems. The 21 students attending the class were asked to solve the problems manually using instructions written in the BASIC computer language. The purpose of this exercise was to prepare students for the next day's class, when they would solve the same problems using the computer. As the students worked on the problem, the teacher and the paraprofessional went from desk to desk helping students. The problems were corrected collectively, with students eagerly volunteering to go to the blackboard to present their solutions.

The aim of the social studies class that was observed was to discuss imperialism. The aim and key terms were written on the board in both English and Spanish, but the spoken language of both teacher and students was Spanish. All of the students had a Spanish-language textbook, Africa; those at the intermediate level of E.S.L. or above also had an English-language textbook, People and Our World. The teacher hung a colorful map on the blackboard to show which African countries had been colonies at the end of the last century. He then asked students why European countries wanted colonies and what were the results of imperialism. Students selected and read relevant paragraphs from the text and volunteered their own answers to these questions. After some discussion, they then wrote the correct answers in their notebooks. A paraprofessional helped students with weak Spanish reading and writing skills.

Content-Area Achievement

The objective was assessed by comparing program and mainstream students' passing rates on school-wide uniform examinations in math, science, and social studies.

Table 8 presents the passing rates for program and mainstream students in mathematics, science, and social studies courses each semester. Statistical significance of the difference between program and mainstream passing rates was determined through a z-test for the significance of the

difference between two proportions*. This procedure tests whether the difference in the rates for two independent groups is greater than can be expected from chance variation.

Examination of Table 8 reveals that, overall, the passing rates of program students were significantly higher than those of mainstream students both semesters.

*J.L. Bruning and B.L. Kintz, Computational Handbook of Statistics (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968.)

TABLE 8

Passing Rates for Program and Mainstream Students in Content-Area Courses

FALL

COURSE	BILINGUAL PROGRAM Number of Students	BILINGUAL PROGRAM Percent Passing	MAINSTREAM CLASSES Number of Students	MAINSTREAM CLASSES Percent Passing	Z-test Value
Science	104	60.6	995	54.0	1.35
Social Studies	143	74.8	529	63.5	2.81*
Math	66	77.3	924	47.6	4.83*
TOTAL	313	70.6	2448	53.6	6.03*

SPRING

COURSE	BILINGUAL PROGRAM Number of Students	BILINGUAL PROGRAM Percent Passing	MAINSTREAM CLASSES Number of Students	MAINSTREAM CLASSES Percent Passing	Z-test Value
Science	91	73.6	918	58.8	2.86*
Social Studies	131	74.0	378	55.8	4.19*
Math	65	75.4	646	49.1	4.24*
TOTAL	287	74.2	1942	55.0	6.54

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

- Overall, program students achieved passing rates that were significantly higher than mainstream students both semesters.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

-- Student awareness of the cultural pluralism of the United States, of career opportunities, and of the value of citizenship will be increased through the activity of four educational field trips.

-- Student awareness of career and survival/life skills will be increased by 80 percent.

The Project BLAST staff organized trips to the American Museum of Natural History, Lincoln Center, the Spanish Repertory Theatre, the American Ballet Company, and a modern dance troupe. In addition to achieving the above stated objective, these trips contributed to project students' high attendance rate because a good attendance record was required for participation in these trips.

A number of activities contributed to the realization of Project BLAST's non-instructional objectives: a citizenship unit was added to social studies classes; a career-orientation/career exploration component was integrated with E.S.L. courses; and a school-wide Career Day was organized to provide students with information on career opportunities. The resource specialist invited several Hispanics to the latter event, including representatives from the New York State Department of Commerce, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Hostos Community College, a law firm, and a radio station. A group of eleventh graders also attended a college fair at New York University, where students received information about and applications to many different colleges.

The career objective could not be assessed as proposed

because there was no instrument to pre-assess students' awareness of career and survival/life skills. However, students performed very well in courses such as typing, office skills, and health careers. Their passing rates were 80 percent in the fall (n=59) and 76 percent in the spring (n=50).

Eighteen BLAST students were recipients of school awards for academic achievement; one student won a prize in the Pan American Essay Contest; two students won prizes in the Written and Spoken French Contest sponsored by the American Association of French Teachers; and one student won a five hundred dollar scholarship offered by the New York State Association for Bilingual Education.

In the program newsletter, Pensamientos Bilingues, several students described their plans for the future. They included going on to college to study such subjects as child psychology, accounting, dentistry, communication, engineering, computer science, and education.

-- Seventy percent of the incoming first-year students will become involved in class, department, school, and community activities.

Because student clubs had been eliminated for budgetary reasons, bilingual homeroom classes were used to develop a sense of group identification equivalent to that created by clubs. During the fall semester, the resource teacher went to each homeroom to announce and organize activities with students, but this was impossible in the spring because she was assigned to patrol the halls during the homeroom period.

Although students had to travel to the school from several parts of the Bronx, they participated in a number of school and program activities. Students contributed to a bilingual magazine that contained their essays, poems, and illustrations. Students also participated in the school's foreign-language week, for which they decorated their classrooms and the department office. Moreover, 20 project students worked in the department or in the school as office aides or tutors, or had pre-teaching assignments. The participation of project BLAST students in this wide variety of activities, coupled with their good attendance record, suggests that the program's objective in this area was achieved.

-- As a result of participating in Project BLAST, the number of students promoted and graduated will be on a par with or greater than the mainstream equivalent.

Data provided by the project director indicated that eight percent (15 out of 185) of program students graduated, compared with 11 percent (385 out of 3,484) of mainstream students. Thus, the objective that program students have the same or a higher graduation rate than mainstream students was not achieved. Data on promotion were not provided. Thus, the second part of the objective could not be assessed.

-- The average daily attendance of program students will be five percent better than students in the mainstream.

-- The drop-out rate for students participating in Project BLAST will be no higher than non-project students.

The award by the school of "Big Mac" certificates (for free hamburgers), school certificates for good attendance, and the making of participation in trips dependent upon a good attendance record contributed to Project BLAST's high attendance and low dropout rates.

The project had a highly effective attendance follow-up program run by the family associate. Teachers sent a copy of their class's daily attendance sheet to the family assistant, and whenever a student had three absences the program sent a letter to his or her parents. Whenever a student was absent five or more times the family assistant made a home visit. According to the family assistant, parents responded positively to this attention. In many cases, parents of students with truancy problems took the initiative of phoning the family assistant to check the child's record.

Since the school's attendance rate includes the attendance of program students, statistical significance of the difference between program and school attendance was determined through the application of a z-test for the significance of a proportion.

Examination of Table 9 reveals that the attendance rate of program students -- 87 percent -- was 11 percentage points above the schoolwide rate. The z-test results (z=3.18) indicate that the attendance rate of program students was significantly higher

(p= <.05) than the school-wide rate. Thus, the program's attendance objective was met.

Examination of Table 9 also reveals that the program's dropout rate -- five percent -- was six percentage points lower than the school-wide rate. Although this difference was not statistically significant, it is important to point out that the number of project students who dropped out was very small. The program met its dropout objective.

TABLE 9

Program and School Attendance and Dropout Rates

	Number of Program Students Reported	Program Rate	School Rate	z-test
Attendance	159	86.7	75.8	3.18**
Dropout	9	5.0	11.3	-.6

**Statistically significant at the .01 level.

- The attendance rate of program students was significantly higher than the school-wide rate, thus meeting the objective.
- The dropout rate of program students was not significantly higher than the school-wide rate, thus meeting the objective.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

-- As a result of their children's participating in Project BLAST, parents will take a more active role in regularly scheduled meetings.

-- The Bilingual Parent Advisory Council will hold at least four meetings during each school year which will be attended by at least 50 percent of the members of the Advisory Council.

-- Ten workshops in E.S.L. will be held for parents.

-- Parents will be contacted twice per term by mail, phone or home visit by the guidance counselor or family assistant. These will be in addition the issuance of three report cards per term.

-- As a result of Project BLAST, there will be a newsletter describing the project's activities issued at least four times during the 1986-87 school year.

The project succeeded in establishing good communication between parents and school. The parents of Project BLAST students were involved in their children's education through attendance at Parent's Advisory Council meetings and E.S.L. workshops, through home visits by the family assistant, and through telephone and mail contacts.

Parents' Advisory Council meetings were held monthly throughout the school year. The purpose of these meetings was to acquaint parents with school-wide procedures, the goals of bilingual education, and the aims of Project BLAST.

The curriculum specialist/resource teacher offered 10 E.S.L. classes to the parents of program students. Attendance at these classes was low because similar ones were offered at nearby Lehman College.

During the year under review, the family assistant made

about 20 telephone calls a week and approximately 30 home visits per term; 110 parents visited the project during the entire school year. The family assistant said she had not been able to make as many home visits as in the previous year because she had to devote more time to clerical tasks.

Although last year's evaluation report recommended that parents be interviewed to discover activities they would like to participate in, these interviews were never held. Nevertheless, in June, BLAST organized an immigration workshop. It was open to community members as well as parents. Project parents also attended an end-of-year talent show.

Project BLAST published four newsletters during the school year to inform parents about school meetings, holidays, and special school procedures. Based on the activities described above, the objectives regarding parental involvement have been achieved.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

-- School personnel will participate in two interdisciplinary workshops each semester.

-- Staff members will enroll in courses at accredited colleges in bilingual education or related fields.

Staff development activities were one of BLAST's major strengths. Like last year, the goals in this area were exceeded. Project BLAST staff members and E.S.L. and bilingual teachers attended joint staff development workshops once a semester. They also attended computer workshops conducted jointly by BLAST staff members and an E.S.L. teacher who was an expert in using

computers for E.S.L. instruction. (The E.S.L. teacher had also been selected as one of the 26 participants in the Language Development Specialists Academy at Hunter College.)

The project coordinator attended four workshops on bilingualism and counseling. During the fall, the project director, the bilingual coordinator, an E.S.L. teacher, and a paraprofessional enrolled in college courses. The bilingual coordinator, an E.S.L. teacher, and a paraprofessional attended college courses in the spring.

Departmental meetings were held once a month to discuss the goals and methods of bilingual education and to listen to reports on conferences and workshops that staff members had attended.

New teachers were linked with "master" teachers who observed and criticized their classroom performance. These new teachers received three visits from supervisors each semester, tenured teachers one visit. Post-visit conferences and a formal writeup followed each visit. Visitation among teachers was also encouraged.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

-- Curricula and resource materials will be developed, adapted, revised, or updated to meet the program's needs.

The curriculum specialist/resource teacher developed, adapted, and/or translated a variety of materials, including courses of study and material for use in computer lab, native language arts, and social studies. In addition, she maintained a file on colleges, reviewed available texts, and consulted with

project teachers regarding their curricular needs and their evaluations of various materials.

The curriculum specialist resource teacher deserves commendation for her motivation and hard work in reviewing and ordering computer software packages in Spanish, E.S.L., science, history, and math. She also helped teachers use the computers and prepared informational handouts for all the trips.

EXITED STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN THE MAINSTREAM

-- Students exiting the program will show an improvement in English reading, as measured by the annual (12 month) administration of the Degrees of Reading Power examination.

-- Ninety percent of the students exiting the program who take the Regents Competency Test in math will pass it.

-- Students exiting the program will achieve a 70 percent passing rate in their mainstream course work in math, science, and social studies.

Data provided by the project director on program students' grades in the math Regents Competency Test indicate that of the seven students tested in the fall, 43 percent achieved a passing grade of at least 65 percent, and of the 8 students tested in the spring, 63 percent passed. Thus, the objective of a 90 percent passing rate was not achieved either semester. However, few students were tested. Thus, caution should be exercised in interpreting the results.

Table 10 presents the passing rates of students exiting the program in mainstream content-area courses. Examination of the table indicates that, overall, students achieved a passing rate of 71 percent. Thus, the objective of a 70 percent passing rate

was achieved.

TABLE 10

Passing Rates in Content-Area Courses
for Students Exiting the Program

	FALL		SPRING	TOTAL	
COURSE	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Overall Passing Rate
Math	24	68.8	19	72.3	70.3
Science	22	70.9	15	71.8	71.3
Social Studies	22	68.8	17	72.5	70.4
		69.5		72.2	70.7

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Midway through the year under review, a new person was appointed director of Project BLAST, as well as chairman of Walton's department of bilingual education, E.S.L., and foreign languages. The transition went smoothly, and project staff members were enthusiastic about the new project director, who they said was committed to the students and had been able to effect positive changes in the project. Perhaps the most important of these changes was securing the principal's agreement to schedule separate Spanish classes for native speakers of Spanish and for mainstream students. The project also followed through on many of the recommendations that were contained in previous years' evaluation reports. Specifically, all of the content-area teachers were bilingual, more parental involvement activities were implemented, and career awareness and computer literacy curricula were developed.

Project BLAST's chief problem areas were: cramped quarters, which made it impossible to have the privacy that often is needed to counsel students effectively; time-consuming building assignments for the project coordinator and the resource specialist (e.g., hall duty and supervision of a school-run nursery program); and disagreements with the school's bilingual guidance counselor regarding mainstreaming policy.

BLAST met its objectives in the following areas: average monthly mastery of CREST objectives; passing rates in E.S.L. and

N.L.A. (Spanish) classes; Regents exam passing rates in Level III Spanish in the spring; passing rates on a teacher-made final exam in Level IV Spanish; passing rates on a teacher-made final exam in Level V spanish; passing rates in content-area classes; career and cultural awareness; extracurricular activities; attendance and dropout rates; parental involvement; staff development; curriculum development; and passing rates in the content areas of students who had been mainstreamed.

BLAST did not meet its objectives in the following areas: New York City Language Fluency Scale, Expressive and Receptive Modes; passing rates on a teacher-made final exam in Level II Spanish; Regents exam passing rates in Level III Spanish in the fall; promotion and graduation rates; and passing rate in the math R.C.T.

The career and survival/life skills objective could not be assessed as proposed because no pre-assessment of student awareness of these skills was provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on classroom observations, interviews with BLAST staff members and classroom teachers, and analysis of program records, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations for improving the program:

- If at all possible, the school administration should avoid giving BLAST staff members, who have many other duties, time-consuming building assignments.
- If Title VII funding is reduced in the coming year, the

project might consider requesting ASPIRA, a community-based Hipanic social-service organization, to provide a part-time counselor for counseling.